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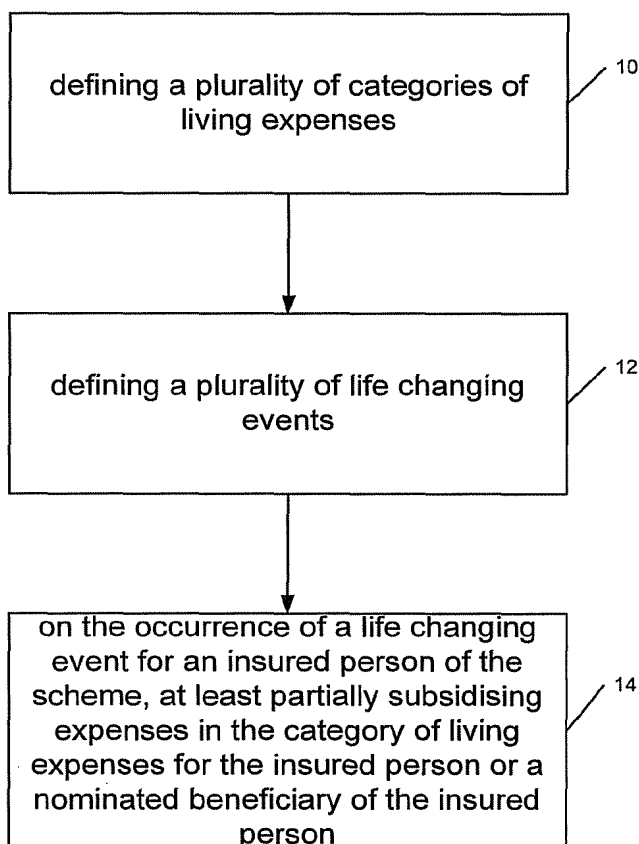
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(54) Title: A SYSTEM AND METHOD OF MANAGING AN INSURANCE SCHEME



(57) Abstract: A method of managing an insurance scheme includes defining a plurality of categories of living expenses. Defining a plurality of life changing events. On the occurrence of a life changing event for an insured person of the scheme, at least partially subsidising expenses in the category of living expenses for the insured person or a nominated beneficiary of the insured person.



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A SYSTEM AND METHOD OF MANAGING AN INSURANCE SCHEME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present application relates to a system and method of managing an insurance scheme.

The present invention may be implemented by a traditional life insurance plan operator for its members or may be implemented by another party.

Conventionally, insurance policies such as life insurance policies operate on the basis that an insured person, sometimes referred to as an insured life, pays a premium to the life insurer, and the life insurer pays a predetermined sum, referred to as the sum assured, to the insured life or his/her beneficiary on the occurrence of an insured event. Typical insured events are the insured life suffering disability, contracting a dread disease or dying.

However, it will be appreciated that the processing and finalising of the payment can take some time, in some cases up to several months or even years. In this instance the insured person may have short term financial difficulties if they are dependent on this payment.

A system and method of addressing this is therefore required.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to one example embodiment, a method of managing an insurance scheme, the method including:

defining a plurality of categories of living expenses;

defining a plurality of life changing events;

on the occurrence of a life changing event for an insured person of the scheme, at least partially subsidising expenses in the category of living expenses for the insured person or a nominated beneficiary of the insured person.

The plurality of living expenses may include at least one of the group consisting of food, clothing, transport, utilities, communication and accommodation expenses.

The subsidy may be a predetermined percentage of the expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses or is a defined amount of the expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses.

In one example, the plurality of life changing events includes disability, contracting a dread disease or dying.

The at least partial subsidising of expenses may occur for a predetermined period such as 12 months.

The at least partial subsidising may be effected by reimbursing the insured person or their nominated beneficiary for expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses.

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The at least partial subsidising may be effected by paying third parties for expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses on behalf of the insured person or their nominated beneficiary.

In one example the at least partial subsidising is effected by calculating the spending of the insured person in the various categories of living expenses for a time period prior to the life changing event and then paying this amount or a percentage of this amount to the insured person or their nominated beneficiary.

In addition, the at least partial subsidy may have a maximum amount applicable calculated by determining the spending of the insured person in the various categories of living expenses for a time period prior to the life changing event such as six months.

The method may be linked to a credit card of the insured life whereby the at least partial subsidising is implemented by paying at least a portion of the amount spent on the credit card on behalf of the insured person or the nominated beneficiary.

The amount of spending in any of the categories of living expenses may be determined by checking historical spending on the credit card.

The present invention further includes an electronic system for managing insurance scheme, the system including:

- a living expenses module to define a plurality of categories of living expenses;

- a life changing events module to define a plurality of life changing events; and

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a calculation module to, on the occurrence of a life changing event for an insured person of the scheme, calculate an at least partial subsidy of expenses in the category of living expenses for the insured person or a nominated beneficiary of the insured person.

The calculation module may calculate the plurality of living expenses that includes at least one of the group consisting of food, clothing, transport, utilities, communication and accommodation expenses.

The calculation module may calculate the at least partial subsidy as a predetermined percentage of the expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses or is a defined amount of the expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses.

The plurality of life changing events may be defined by the life changing events module includes disability, contracting a dread disease or dying.

The calculation module may calculate the at least partial subsidising of expenses for a predetermined period such as 12 months.

The system may further including a payment module to effect a payment of the at least partial subsidy.

The payment module may effect the payment by reimbursing the insured person or their nominated beneficiary for expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses.

The at least partial subsidising may be effected by the payment module paying third parties for expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses on behalf of the insured person or their nominated beneficiary.

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The at least partial subsidising is effected by the calculation module calculating the spending of the insured person in the various categories of living expenses for a time period prior to the life changing event and then the payment module paying this amount or a percentage of this amount to the insured person or their nominated beneficiary.

The at least partial subsidy may have a maximum amount applicable calculated by the calculation module determining the spending of the insured person in the various categories of living expenses for a time period prior to the life changing event such as six months.

The method may be linked to a credit card of the insured life whereby the at least partial subsidy is implemented by the payment module paying at least a portion of the amount spent on the credit card on behalf of the insured person or the nominated beneficiary.

In one example, the amount of spending in any of the categories of living expenses is determined by the calculation module by checking historical spending on the credit card.

A machine-readable medium embodying instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform a method including:

defining a plurality of categories of living expenses;

defining a plurality of life changing events;

on the occurrence of a life changing event for an insured person of the scheme, at least partially subsidising expenses in the category of living expenses for the insured person or a nominated beneficiary of the insured person.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a flow chart illustrating the methodology of an example embodiment; and

Figure 2 is a block diagram illustrating an example system to implement the methodologies described herein.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

The systems and methodology described herein relate to a system and method of managing an insurance scheme such as a life insurance scheme.

Conventional life insurance schemes operate on the basis that an insured person, referred to as the insured life, pays premiums on a regular basis to the life insurer, specifying a sum assured which is an amount to be paid out on the occurrence of an insured event. For example, on the death of the insured life, a predetermined death benefit is paid to the nominated beneficiaries of the insured life. If the insured life is disabled or suffers a dread disease, a different, lesser amount is paid out.

The method and system will be described with reference to these kind of schemes but it will be appreciated that the method and system could equally be applied to other types of insurance schemes.

It will also be appreciated that the system and methodology may be implemented by any relevant person or organisation. For example, the system and methodology may be operated by the organisation which operates the life insurance scheme or may be implemented by another associated organisation. In one example the system and methodology may

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be implemented by a financial organisation which issues credit cards to its members.

For purposes of illustration, the system and methodology will be described herein as being operated by the managers of a life insurance scheme.

Referring to Figure 1, a plurality of categories of living expenses are defined (block 10). In the illustrated example, the categories of living expenses include at least one of the group consisting of food, clothing, transport, utilities, communication and accommodation expenses. It will be appreciated that the method may include defining all of these as categories of living expenses.

In addition to this, a plurality of life changing events are defined (block 12). The plurality of life changing events in the example includes disability, contracting a dread disease or dying as these are typical of the kind of events which are insured by life insurance schemes. However, it will be appreciated that in other contexts these life changing events may be other events such as the birth of a child or changing jobs to name but a few examples.

In any event, the occurrence of a life changing event for an insured person of the scheme results in an at least partial subsidising of expenses in the category of living expenses for the insured person or a nominated beneficiary of the insured person (block 14). Typically the subsidy is arranged for the insured person but where the insured person has died or is otherwise incapacitated the subsidy will be activated for a beneficiary that the insured person has nominated prior to the event.

The subsidy may be a predetermined percentage of the expenses which will be incurred in the defined category of living expenses or may be all of the expenses which will be incurred in the defined category of living expenses and may be available for a predetermined period such as 12 months, for example. In one embodiment this period will typically not be

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too long a period where this is intended to be a bridging type of assistance. In other embodiments this may be intended as long term assistance and could then be extended for a number of years, such as until the nominated beneficiary passes away or reaches a certain age.

The subsidy could also take any one of a number of different forms.

In one example, the subsidy is effected by reimbursing the insured person or their nominated beneficiary for expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses.

Alternatively, the subsidy is effected by paying third parties for expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses on behalf of the insured person or their nominated beneficiary.

In a third example, the subsidy is effected by calculating the spending of the insured person in the various categories of living expenses for a time period prior to the life changing event and then paying this amount or a percentage of this amount to the insured person or their nominated beneficiary.

The subsidy may have a maximum or minimum amount applicable calculated by determining the spending of the insured person in the various categories of living expenses for a time period prior to the life changing event, such as be six months, for example.

In one embodiment, the method is linked to a credit card of the insured life whereby the subsidy is implemented by paying a portion of the amount spent on the credit card on behalf of the insured person or the nominated beneficiary.

In this example, the amount of spending in any of the categories of living expenses is determined by checking historical spending on the credit card.

A detailed example of the method is illustrated in the tables below.

Table 1: Events Covered

Life Changing Events Covered	Benefit Term
Death	12 Months
Disability	12 Months
Severe Illness	12 Months

Table 2: Benefits Provided

Benefits Provided			
Living Expense Category	Benefit Description	Benefit	Maximum benefit per month
Food / Clothing and other	Shopping Discount	100% of average monthly spend of the past 12 months, paid monthly	Food / Clothing and other
Transport	Petrol Discount / Rebate	100% of average monthly spend of the past 12 months, paid monthly	Transport
Communication	Cell phone Discount	100% of average monthly spend of the past 12 months, paid monthly	Communication
Credit	Repayment of the o/s Credit Balance	100% of the o/s credit balance up to a maximum of R30 000.	Credit

In the above example, the living expense category of food and clothing is implemented by giving the insured person or their nominated beneficiary a 100% discount at a chain of shopping stores.

Alternatively, this could be implemented by paying for certain kinds of foods and or clothing.

The methodology works particularly well when implemented in conjunction with a credit card which is issued to the insured person. This is because the insured person can continue to purchase the necessary goods using

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the credit card and certain entries in the credit card will be automatically paid for by the insurer.

It will be appreciated that the insured person or their nominated beneficiary is provided short term protection following a life changing event so that they are assisted in continuing their day to day living.

Figure 2 illustrates an exemplary system for implementing the above methodologies.

A server 20 includes a number of modules to implement the methodologies described above.

A living expenses module 22 defines a plurality of categories of living expenses.

A life changing events module 24 defines a plurality of life changing events.

A calculation module 26, on the occurrence of a life changing event for an insured person of the scheme, calculate an at least partial subsidy of expenses in the category of living expenses for the insured person or a nominated beneficiary of the insured person.

A payment module 28 is used to effect a payment of the at least partial subsidy according to one of the methods described above.

The system may include a database 30 for storing information to allow the methodologies to be implemented.

The modules described above may be implemented by a machine-readable medium embodying instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform any of the methods described above.

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It will be appreciated that embodiments of the present invention are not limited to such architecture, and could equally well find application in a distributed, or peer-to-peer, architecture system. Thus the modules illustrated could be located on one or more servers operated by one or more institutions.

CLAIMS:

1. A method of managing an insurance scheme, the method including:

defining a plurality of categories of living expenses;

defining a plurality of life changing events;

on the occurrence of a life changing event for an insured person of the scheme, at least partially subsidising expenses in the category of living expenses for the insured person or a nominated beneficiary of the insured person.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the plurality of living expenses includes at least one of the group consisting of food, clothing, transport, utilities, communication and accommodation expenses.
3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the subsidy is a predetermined percentage of the expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses or is a defined amount of the expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses.
4. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the plurality of life changing events includes disability, contracting a dread disease or dying.
5. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the at least partial subsidising of expenses occurs for a predetermined period.
6. A method according to claim 5 wherein the period is 12 months.
7. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the at least partial subsidising is effected by reimbursing the insured person or

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their nominated beneficiary for expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses.

8. A method according to any of claims 1 to 7 wherein the at least partial subsidising is effected by paying third parties for expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses on behalf of the insured person or their nominated beneficiary.
9. A method according to any of claims 1 to 7 wherein the at least partial subsidising is effected by calculating the spending of the insured person in the various categories of living expenses for a time period prior to the life changing event and then paying this amount or a percentage of this amount to the insured person or their nominated beneficiary.
10. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the at least partial subsidy has a maximum amount applicable calculated by determining the spending of the insured person in the various categories of living expenses for a time period prior to the life changing event.
11. A method according to claim 10 wherein the time period is six months.
12. A method according to any preceding claim wherein the method is linked to a credit card of the insured life whereby the at least partial subsidising is implemented by paying at least a portion of the amount spent on the credit card on behalf of the insured person or the nominated beneficiary.
13. A method according to claim 12 wherein the amount of spending in any of the categories of living expenses is determined by checking historical spending on the credit card.

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14. An electronic system for managing insurance scheme, the system including:

a living expenses module to define a plurality of categories of living expenses;

a life changing events module to define a plurality of life changing events; and

a calculation module to, on the occurrence of a life changing event for an insured person of the scheme, calculate an at least partial subsidy of expenses in the category of living expenses for the insured person or a nominated beneficiary of the insured person.

15. A system according to claim 14 wherein the calculation module calculates the plurality of living expenses that includes at least one of the group consisting of food, clothing, transport, utilities, communication and accommodation expenses.

16. A system according to claim 14 or claim 15 wherein the calculation module calculates the at least partial subsidy as a predetermined percentage of the expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses or is a defined amount of the expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses.

17. A system according to any one of claim 14 to 16 wherein the plurality of life changing events defined by the life changing events module includes disability, contracting a dread disease or dying.

18. A system according to any one of claims 14 to 17 wherein the calculation module calculates the at least partial subsidising of expenses for a predetermined period.

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19. A system according to claim 18 wherein the period is 12 months.
20. A system according to any one of claims 14 to 19 further including a payment module to effect a payment of the at least partial subsidy.
21. A system according to claim 20 wherein the payment module effects the payment by reimbursing the insured person or their nominated beneficiary for expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses.
22. A system according to any of claims 20 or 21 wherein the at least partial subsidising is effected by the payment module paying third parties for expenses incurred in the defined category of living expenses on behalf of the insured person or their nominated beneficiary.
23. A system according to any of claims 20 to 22 wherein the at least partial subsidising is effected by the calculation module calculating the spending of the insured person in the various categories of living expenses for a time period prior to the life changing event and then the payment module paying this amount or a percentage of this amount to the insured person or their nominated beneficiary.
24. A system according to any of claims 20 to 23 wherein the at least partial subsidy has a maximum amount applicable calculated by the calculation module determining the spending of the insured person in the various categories of living expenses for a time period prior to the life changing event.
25. A system according to claim 24 wherein the time period is six months.
26. A system according to any one of claims 20 to 25 wherein the method is linked to a credit card of the insured life whereby the at

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least partial subsidy is implemented by the payment module paying at least a portion of the amount spent on the credit card on behalf of the insured person or the nominated beneficiary.

27. A system according to claim 26 wherein the amount of spending in any of the categories of living expenses is determined by the calculation module by checking historical spending on the credit card.

28. A machine-readable medium embodying instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform a method including:

defining a plurality of categories of living expenses;

defining a plurality of life changing events;

on the occurrence of a life changing event for an insured person of the scheme, at least partially subsidising expenses in the category of living expenses for the insured person or a nominated beneficiary of the insured person.

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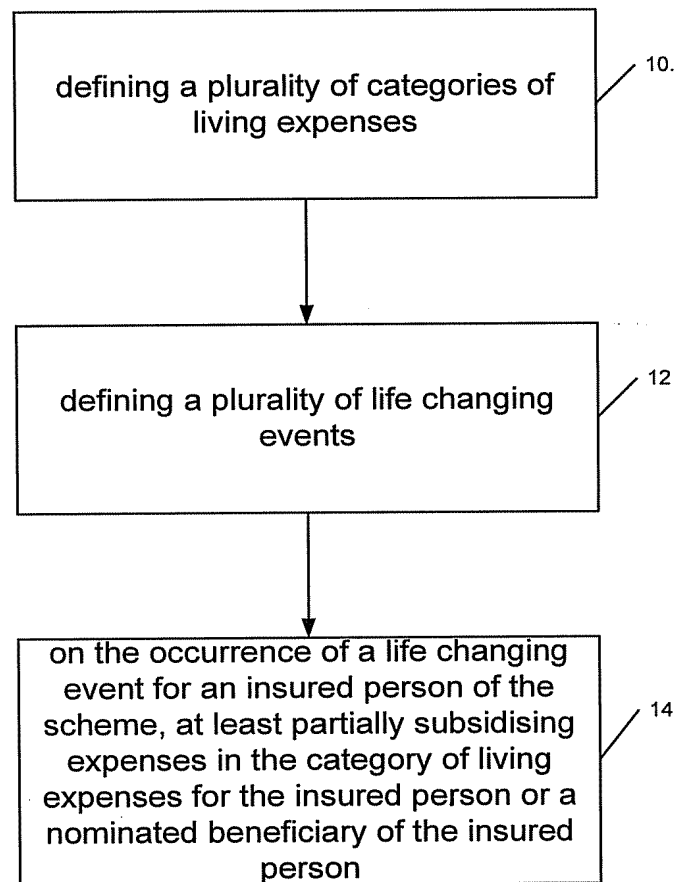


Fig. 1

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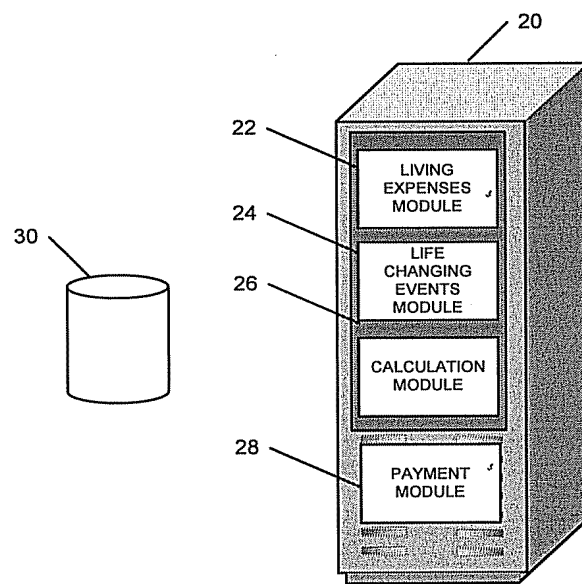


Fig. 2